

As the President and CEO of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, John has been indispensable in making possible the economic growth and general welfare that Hoosiers in northeast Indiana have enjoyed the last 15 years and will continue to enjoy for a long time to come.

John led the partnership since its founding in 2006. Prior to the partnership's creation, cities and counties in the region competed, more than did they cooperate, for investment. The region was experiencing a declining per-capita income and change was needed.

Thanks to John's leadership and his vision to make northeast Indiana a globally competitive economy, investment started coming in and the region began a transformation.

In his own words, "Working together, our region has overcome challenges and achieved major milestones many thought not possible. In collaboration with our partners from the private and public sectors throughout the 11 counties, we have built a foundation of regional strength and momentum that will serve the residents of Northeast Indiana for years to come."

John has been described as having "Unabashed passion for all things Northeast Indiana." Anyone who has met him agrees.

As John retires, I wish him the best for all that he has done after a long and distinguished career. This record is testament to his service for which northeast Indiana is grateful.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF JOHN LEONARD, JR.

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the esteemed career and public service of John V. Leonard, Jr, who retires from General Dynamics Electric Boat as Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer on July 6, 2021. While John retires from a career in the private sector, his outstanding leadership and dedication as a senior employee at Electric Boat holds merits for maintaining the public interest as he has helped oversee an economic boon at Electric Boat, creating thousands of jobs for the hard working residents of eastern Connecticut while simultaneously advancing our national security priorities.

Having earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from the nearby University of Rhode Island, John was always meant to apply his expertise toward the betterment of our local community. Before dedicating his career to Electric Boat, however, John first went on to serve in the Marine Corps, achieving the rank of Captain, then going on to attend Columbia University where he earned an MBA in numerous areas of concentration. From there, John joined Electric Boat in 1980—first as a Financial Analyst—where he ultimately carried out the company's mission for more than 40 years.

John's track at Electric Boat has been defined by loyalty and an ever-increasing degree of responsibility. Receiving one of his first major promotions in 1995 to Vice President of Finance, John seized upon the opportunity to prove his leadership capabilities. In 1998,

when Electric Boat was experiencing an era of downsizing and uncertain financial sustainability, John envisioned a path where others had not and earned the company the Block I contract with the Navy for two Virginia-Class attack submarines. His mastery of unconventional problem solving and deep understanding of the engineering thought processes led John and Electric Boat to lay the groundwork that has allowed the company to meet today's high demands from the Navy.

John's success and contractually-focused perspective most recently earned him the appointment of Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer in 2019, which has come after his promotion to the Chief Financial Office in 2003. As Senior Vice President, John has been responsible for a wide range of functions at Electric Boat, including finances, contracts, tax, strategic planning, IT management, oversight of the facility master plan, Applied Physical Sciences and the Washington Engineering Office.

Madam Speaker, John's presence and expertise at Electric Boat will be sorely missed. Our region and Electric Boat, however, can at least find solace in what his leadership has helped create: a healthy backlog of submarine construction and the highly sought after Columbia Build I contract, meaning that Electric Boat will be responsible for building out the nation's first ever, next generation sea-based strategic deterrent. This bright future for Electric Boat means great things for the second district's local economy and even more for the security of our national defense. We owe a lot of thanks to John Leonard's leadership abilities. To that end, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating John on his well-earned retirement, where he now goes on to spend more time with his wife Julia and adult sons Adam, Jack, Mason and Max.

COMMEMORATING 225 YEARS OF TENNESSEE STATEHOOD WITH THE KICKOFF CELEBRATION IN JONESBOROUGH

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 225 years of Tennessee statehood. June 1, 2021 began a year-long celebration which will rightfully begin in the oldest town in Tennessee, Jonesborough, located in the First Congressional District and which was established seventeen years before Tennessee was granted statehood.

The original territory of Tennessee consisted of six counties—Washington, Sullivan, Greene, Davidson, Sumner, and Tennessee (later Montgomery & Robertson)—under the jurisdiction of North Carolina from 1777 to 1788. The counties requested protection from Native Americans and the right to navigate the Mississippi River but North Carolina neglected these territories so, in 1784, dissatisfied East Tennesseans formed the breakaway state of Franklin, or "Frankland," under the direction of John Sevier, the newly named governor. As North Carolinian officials discovered the territory's attempted independence, they slowly reasserted their authority over the area. Dis-

agreements among rival factions, coupled with the North Carolina resistance, doomed the state of Franklin, which passed out of existence in 1788. The following year, North Carolina gave its Tennessee lands to the Federal government which designated it as the Territory of the United States, South of the River Ohio, also known as the Southwest Territory. William Blount governed the territory and, in 1795, called for a constitutional convention in Knoxville to begin the process of joining the Union. Tennessee became the first Federal territory to apply for statehood and, after a close vote on June 1, 1796, became the 16th state of the Union.

Our Governor, Bill Lee, has declared the theme for this yearlong celebration "Untold Tennessee." He has encouraged Tennesseans to share their untold stories of people, places and events that have shaped our state since its beginning. With Jonesborough being the oldest town in Tennessee, established seventeen years prior to statehood, and home to the International Storytelling Center, it is only fitting that those stories begin to be told here.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Great State of Tennessee on 225 years of statehood and Jonesborough, located in the First Congressional District, on being the site of the kickoff of the yearlong celebration. I am proud to be a Tennessean and, even more so, to represent the people of the First District who will all be part of the next 225 years of stories that will continue to shape our state.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF EDDIE GOSSAGE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the lifetime accomplishments of Eddie Gossage, President and Manager of Texas Motor Speedway. Mr. Gossage retires following a career spanning over 25 years at Speedway Motorsports, LLC. It is my privilege to commend him for his tremendous support of North Texas and the creation of one of Fort Worth's most famous landmarks.

Mr. Gossage was personally instrumental in the founding, management, and ultimate success of Texas Motor Speedway. Since the facility's groundbreaking in 1995, it has not only become a go-to sporting destination for countless North Texans, it has also hosted the largest single-day crowd in Texas sports history. In addition, Mr. Gossage's motorsports accomplishments include hosting the first ever Indy night race. TMS has been the site of major music festivals and venue for countless civic and corporate events.

I applaud Mr. Gossage for his philanthropic efforts in bolstering the health and wellbeing of our community. Mr. Gossage serves on the Board of Directors for Speedway Children's Charities, and, most recently, offered the speedway as a "super" venue for distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Texas Motor Speedway's partnership with the Denton County Public Health Department resulted in the administration of over 375,000 vaccines from early February to mid-May. Thanks to Mr.

Gossage's opening TMS to facilitate large-scale vaccine delivery, over 10,000 North Texans were immunized on multiple days at the Speedway's drive-through vaccine clinic.

Mr. Gossage's illustrious career has been punctuated by both commercial success and charitable service. I wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement and thank him for all he has done for our community and state.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MELISSA F. JAMES ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. FRANK D. LUCAS

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to take this opportunity to recognize Melissa F. James, who is retiring from the House of Representatives after 26 years of exemplary service.

Upon graduation from Oklahoma State University in 1994, Melissa relocated to Washington, D.C., to begin her career with the Honorable Tom Coburn, newly elected from her hometown in Oklahoma. Melissa's hard work, problem-solving skills, and can-do attitude quickly made her a valued member of Congressman Coburn's staff. After starting as a staff assistant, Melissa eventually was promoted to be Congressman Coburn's scheduler, a position she held until Mr. Coburn retired from the House in 2001.

Melissa remained in the House, next serving for 10 years as the scheduler and office manager to Congressman Todd Tiahrt of Kansas. In 2011, after Mr. Tiahrt's departure from Congress, Melissa joined the office of Congressman Randy Neugebauer of Texas. In her time with Mr. Neugebauer, Melissa frequently displayed a deft touch with difficult questions from both other staff and constituents. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a finer office representative than Melissa, who embodies the true spirit of public service. Melissa proved herself to be an irreplaceable member of every team on which she served, as demonstrated by the fact that she never left a Member's staff until the Member left the House.

After Congressman Neugebauer's retirement from the House in 2017, Melissa joined the Office of General Counsel (OGC) as its administrative director. Melissa took on new tasks and responsibilities with aplomb and immediately became an indispensable part of the OGC team. It would be impossible to list all of her contributions, but among them, she has taken a lead role with regard to all aspects of office management and administration, including with the office budget and computer systems. During her time with OGC, Melissa demonstrated herself to be dedicated to serving Members, Officers, and employees of the House, remarkably trustworthy and utterly fearless when faced with novel, sensitive, and difficult matters. Melissa's unwavering resolve and commitment to the House and OGC was always evident, as was her ability to find a solution to seemingly any problem.

Beyond her incredible dedication to her work, Melissa has been a kind and thoughtful coworker to all, treating everyone from the Members to the mail-carriers with the utmost respect and kindness. As scores of current

and former colleagues can attest, Melissa is a true joy to work with, and is someone who makes the workday better for everyone with whom she comes into contact. It is no exaggeration to say that she has become family to many over her years on the Hill. Melissa is always eager to share her passion and contagious enthusiasm for golf—and really any sport in which an alum of her cherished OSU Cowboys (Go Pokes) plays—so much so that anyone who knows her soon becomes a fan as well. Melissa's cheerful and welcoming presence on the Hill will be sorely missed by all those who had the pleasure of working with her.

It will be hard to imagine the House without Melissa. Every day for the past 26 years, Melissa has served the House with unmatched dedication and tenacity. Regardless of the task before her, Melissa will always find a way to accomplish it—a quality that will continue to serve her well in her future endeavors. On behalf of the Office of General Counsel and the entire House community, I thank Melissa for her decades of service and wish for her a joyous and relaxing retirement among her many friends and family in Oklahoma.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JAMES ALKIRE

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of James "Jim" Alkire.

Jim was born in West Virginia in 1934. When he was 10 years old, Jim's family relocated to Arizona where he spent the rest of his childhood and attended the University of Arizona. In 1957, he was drafted into the United States Army and served two years of stateside duty. Jim then returned to his education and graduated from Texas Western College. From there, he obtained a master's degree in public administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

After completing his education, Jim pursued a career in public service. He served as the director of finance and assistant to the city manager in Highland Park, Illinois, and then the city manager of Centralia, Illinois. In 1970, Jim and his family made a final move to Pleasant Hill, California, where he served as the city manager until retiring in 1987. Jim is remembered as an outstanding leader who fostered positive working environments.

In his personal life, Jim married his wife, Margaret, in 1960, and the couple had three children. Jim was a long-time Rotarian in Illinois and California and joined the Pleasant Hill Rotary Club in 1970, where he participated in many years of invaluable community service. Jim was also an emeritus member of the Pleasant Hill Community Foundation and active member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. He coached baseball for his sons, listened to jazz music, and was known for his sense of humor. In retirement, Jim and Margaret traveled the world together.

Sadly, Jim passed away in April of this year. Please join me in honoring Jim for his leadership and many contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING STATE SENATOR JIM BEALL OF CALIFORNIA

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 11, 2021

Mrs. TORRES of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, California State Senator Jim Beall. After more than 40 years of dedicated public service to Santa Clara County, Jim recently retired at the end of his term.

As a Santa Clara County native, Jim spent his formative years in San Jose as one of ten children. He lived in a home where money was tight and worked in the crop fields as a teenager, learning the values of a hard day's work, self-reliance, and giving back to his community. Jim put his passion for public service to work at the age of 24 when he served on the San Jose City Planning Commission, and at age 28, he became the youngest person ever elected to the San Jose City Council. As a council member, Jim worked to fix and update the county's infrastructure and expand affordable housing. His role in creating San Jose's Housing Department was key to the development and growth of the city he loved serving. Jim's efforts to bring new and updated access to the San Jose Community as chair of the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority led him to be the first in California to successfully pass a half-cent sales tax increase to raise funds to help build Highways 85, 101, and 237. Later as a member of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, Jim followed through on his commitment to increasing access to healthcare and mental health services and worked with his colleagues to pass the Children's Health Initiative, which ensured every child in the county had health insurance.

Jim continued his public service as a member of both the California State Assembly and California State Senate. Jim passed major infrastructure bills including SB1, one of the largest infrastructure bills in California's history which created over 150,000 new jobs and repaired and updated roads, and SB 595 which supported regional transportation projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. He also worked on a number of public safety bills including passing Audrie's Law, a bill that empowered survivors of sexual assault by reforming juvenile sexual assault statutes. As a lifelong advocate for foster youth, Jim authored first-in-the-nation legislation to extend foster youth benefits to more young people and passed college access bills that have led to higher graduation rates of foster youth. Jim also championed the cause to improve mental health treatment by authoring several bills that increased access to such services and played a critical role in ensuring California healthcare plans included mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment. Through his final term in the California State Senate that ended in December 2020, Jim has worked tirelessly and selflessly for his community and the list of his legislative accomplishments goes on and on.

I was lucky to serve with Jim in both the California State Assembly and in the State Senate. I was always impressed by his thoughtfulness and dedication to improving his community and state. As he moves on to a